RFI Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. How do the HIT Catalyst and GPG programs differ?

The HIT Catalyst and Green Proving Ground programs both aim to provide actionable data to transform the market for sustainable, cost-effective, high impact building technologies.

The GPG program focuses on providing information that can inform investment decisions throughout GSA's real estate portfolio. GSA has jurisdiction over 1,500 federally owned real assets across the nation, spanning over 180 million rentable square feet. GPG leverages this portfolio to serve as a "proving ground" for promising emerging building technologies. When a technology is selected for evaluation, the program will match the technology with one or more federal buildings for real-world testing, and directly oversee its installation and evaluation. Findings from M&V through the program are intended to first and foremost provide deployment recommendations relative to GSA's building portfolio, which includes buildings that, on average, are larger and more energy efficient than the typical commercial building in the U.S.

The HIT Catalyst program supports the adoption of emerging and cost-effective building technologies through partnerships with the commercial buildings industry. The program will facilitate matchmaking of technologies with commercial building partners (which may include privately owned buildings, federally owned buildings outside of GSA's jurisdiction, and institutional buildings), but will not directly provide the test bed in the same way that GPG does. The HIT Catalyst will support third party verification of technology performance, including a final technical report and case study to be deployed throughout DOE's stakeholder networks.

For more information about each program, please visit gsa.gov/gpg and buildings.energy.gov/hitcatalyst.

2. Why are you issuing this RFI jointly?

The issuance of the joint RFI demonstrates one way the U.S. government is committed to sustainability and interagency collaboration, following the February 2015 Memorandum of Understanding between GSA and DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). By drawing from a single pool of applications, GPG and HIT Catalyst can coordinate their program selections to streamline programmatic offerings for industry and to offer the greatest value to the federal government, the U.S. taxpayer, and the commercial building industry.

3. Can I be considered for both or only one program?

All applications will be reviewed by both GPG and HIT Catalyst for their eligibility and suitability for each program. Applications may be selected for one program, both programs, or neither. If you believe your technology to be better suited for one program over the other, please include your preference and reasoning in your application.

Technology Eligibility

1. Our technology does not seem to fit any of the listed technology categories. What should I do?

This year's RFI defines the following technology categories:

- **Energy Management and Energy Management Information Systems**: Tools, systems and services for optimizing commercial building energy use.

- **Window Attachments**: Daylight and solar shading systems and films that provide enhanced energy performance and human comfort.

- **Fans and Blowers**: Technologies that improve fan energy performance for new or retrofit applications, or both.

- **Renewable Energy**: Technologies that produce, manage or store onsite electricity generated using solar, wind, geothermal, or other onsite energy generation methods.

- **Water Conservation and Reuse**: Technologies and processes that reduce water usage or reuse water resources.

Unlike previous years of the GPG program, this year's RFI focuses exclusively on the above five categories and does not include several other major categories, such as those technologies that directly provide lighting and heating. If your technology does not fall into one or more of the above categories, please check back next year for a new set of categories. If you are uncertain if your technology falls into the above categories, please contact gpg+2016@gsa.gov with sufficient and relevant information for the evaluation team to determine whether your technology would be eligible for consideration this year.

2. What technology maturity level are you expecting? Will you consider a technology that is in the prototype stage? What about a technology that is already fully commercialized abroad, but not in the U.S.?

Both programs are interested in technologies that represent the full continuum of product development and market readiness, including those that have been commercially available for several years but are still developing their market and supply chain in the U.S., and late-stage pre-commercial technologies that are still defining their value proposition through product development. The HIT Catalyst program focuses on technologies that are one year or less from being market-ready, which can be defined as available for purchase through normal market channels.

We consider many factors when choosing to evaluate a technology, including innovation, anticipated performance, cost and energy savings, technical risk, and deployment potential for GSA's portfolio or commercial applications. For early-stage technologies, it is important to bear in mind that evaluations are conducted in tenant-occupied environments. Stable technologies that are deemed safe for real-world operation will fare better than those that are not.

For technologies that have seen full commercialization abroad but not yet in the U.S., your application should include barriers to entry in the U.S. and how a GPG and/or HIT Catalyst evaluation would help to overcome those barriers.

3. Does acceptance into either program require results from prior third-party evaluations? If so, what is the minimum level of test results that is needed for a technology to be considered for the program?

We are looking for some measure of validation. We encourage you to submit anything that helps us understand your technology and gives us confidence of where you are in the innovation cycle. If your technology has already undergone other third-party studies, you should submit those results with your application.

If you do not have third-party studies completed or underway, your application should include sufficient information to validate the functionality of your technology when operating at scale.

If you have a technology with well-documented real world performance and that is ready for the market, you should express clearly in your application what the value of a GPG or HIT Catalyst test-bed assessment will be.

4. What are the IT security requirements for IP-enabled technologies, cloud-based analytics, and information management systems?

Technologies considered for inclusion in the GPG program must comply with GSA IT Policy and Governance, available at gsa.gov/gpg. If your technology has any wireless or IP-enabled components, cloud-based analytics, or requirements for gathering data from the building automation system, please be prepared to engage in information sessions with GSA IT Security prior to selection. If your technology is selected for measurement and verification, you will be expected to work closely with GSA IT Security to arrive at an approved technical solution to your network and communications infrastructure.

IT security requirements for technologies piloted through HIT Catalyst will be considered on a case-by-case basis. While HIT Catalyst does not have a strict set of guidelines for IT security, it should be noted that host sites are often owned, operated, or

occupied by companies and organizations with significant security requirements. Generally, your ability to demonstrate your technology's compliance with stringent IT security standards will increase your technology's likelihood of being matched with a host site.

RFI Application

1. Can information be released about the typical number of applicants and the number of finalists?

This is the first year that GPG and HIT Catalyst are issuing a joint RFI, so fully comparable data is not available at this time. When seeking a broad range of technologies, GPG's annual data call has yielded approximately 100 responses. Historically, GSA has identified between six and twelve technologies for study in a given year, and the HIT Catalyst program has demonstrated between three and ten technologies in a given year. Capacity for both programs varies based on need and funding levels. Ultimately, the number of technologies selected depends on a variety of internal and external factors, including scope and quality of submitted technologies, budget and resource constraints and project siting opportunities.

2. Should the RFI submission include the method of the M&V and who will be responsible for the M&V?

You know your product better than anyone else. If you can outline an M&V process and explain how it will benefit your technology, you may be more likely to make it to the 2nd round of selection. Previously published reports on the GPG website may provide guidance in framing the M&V process.

3. I am having trouble or technical issues submitting my response. Can you help?

The following recommendations are based on queries we've received from respondents who have experienced problems filling out our online RFI webform.

1. We recommend developing your responses in a Microsoft Word (or any word processor) document before transferring the information to the appropriate RFI field. This will help you retain information if you encounter submission glitches.

2. You must fill in ALL fields. If there are fields for which you do not have information, type in "n/a" or another approximate placeholder value.

3. Avoid common issues with specific fields:

- Phone: Use a valid 10-digit U.S. phone number. Do not include hyphens, parentheses, or any other symbols.

- State: Use the two-letter state abbreviation with ALL CAPS.

- Country: Use the three-letter country abbreviation with ALL CAPS.

- Zip Code: Use a valid 5-digit U.S. zip code.

- DUNS: Use a valid 9-digit DUNS number. If you do not have a DUNS number, please visit the U.S. Small Business Administration website to find out how to create one in one business day, or contact gpg+2016@gsa.gov to be assigned a placeholder number.

4. Character count limits are inclusive of spaces.

5. When you click the Submit button, you should advance to a confirmation screen. If you do not, please review the document to confirm that all fields have been completed. Incomplete fields will be labeled with an error message. In the event of a connection time-out or reset, please refresh the form and re-submit your information.

6.   After a successful submission, the e-mail address you provided as a point of contact will receive a confirmation for your records. The message will contain all the information that was captured from your RFI form, as well as a reference number, or GPGA-#, that identifies your submission. Use the GPGA-# when corresponding with either program.

4. Are non-U.S. companies allowed to apply?

Yes. If your long-term goal is to sell to the federal government, there will need to be an established trade agreement with the U.S. Your application should indicate relevant trade agreements, and/or plans to expand into U.S. markets.

5. Can two organizations submit a joint application?

Yes. Please describe the nature of the partnership in your application (e.g., who will be providing the technology, who will serve as the main point of contact, how responsibilities may be delineated between parties).

6. What email address should we use for additional questions?

Please send all inquiries—including those about the HIT Catalyst program—to gpg+20165@gsa.gov. Questions will be internally directed to the appropriate contacts for response.

Program Participation

1. What is the timeline for a study? How long will the evaluation process take?

Finalists are anticipated to be selected in late winter/early spring. Specific dates and times vary depending on the volume of applications received, interest from potential host sites, and other coordination factors.

GPG projects are typically slated for installation in fall. The duration of a GPG measurement and verification (M&V) study can vary depending on the type of technology in question, the complexity of the test-bed location and site preparation, the technology installation process, and the M&V study's objectives. For planning purposes, respondents to this RFI should assume that the GPG program's project planning and design will start in summer 2016, and that the M&V will take approximately one year to complete. The final report is typically published approximately six months following the completion of M&V.

Timing of HIT Catalyst demonstrations will vary based on host site interest and M&V objectives. DOE may assist with host site suitability evaluation and site selection criteria; once a host site is identified, technology providers and host sites will need to negotiate and finalize demonstration details. The timeline for baseline data collection and technology performance verification will then be included in the M&V plan, which will be reviewed and concurred upon by the host site, DOE, the technology provider, and, if applicable, GSA. DOE will publish preliminary results prior to the completion of the demonstration project.

Both programs strive for the most efficient path and timeline to provide actionable results to accelerate deployment of effective technologies.

2. Are there any costs to participate in GPG or HIT Catalyst? Does GSA or DOE provide grants to participants in their programs?

Grants or any other source of funding will not be offered to technology suppliers by either program. There are no direct fees associated with either program, but participation is an investment. Initially, there is the time you invest in completing the RFI and supplying information about your technology to the RFI selection team.

If you are asked to participate in the GPG program, you will be expected to gift your technology for evaluation to GSA (see more information in Question 4 below). You will also be expected to dedicate time to providing input to and reviewing project plans, installation and operational guides, and draft reports. You may also be expected to travel to the site for a limited number of

coordination meetings; GSA will not cover the cost of travel. GSA will provide a test-bed location and funding for the installation, and will fund third-party technical researchers to study the performance of the technology.

DOE will not provide funding for technology suppliers or host sites; any technology purchases must be negotiated directly between supplier and host site. DOE will facilitate host site development through stakeholder networks such as the Better Buildings program and pay for third party M&V by the National Laboratories.

3. Do we still maintain ownership of our intellectual property?

Both programs operate under counsel to protect your intellectual property. Neither GSA nor DOE will violate, modify, or directly contribute to your intellectual property.

4. With respect to the gifting process for GPG, what quantity of technology would be expected to be transferred to GSA?

The quantity of units for gifting to GSA is mutually agreed upon in discussions with the manufacturer, the research team and the GPG program team in consideration of the M&V study objectives. The set quantity depends on the technology type and the number of agreed-upon M&V study sites. GSA looks for the minimum quantity to yield test results that enable a conclusive recommendation for deployment. In addition, there are at times aesthetic considerations, as might be the case with a technology such as light fixture replacements, where a certain number of units might be required to create a coherent sense of design in tenant-occupied spaces.

GPG will respect any restrictions you may have on the quantity of technology you are reasonably able to gift. However, GPG will NOT, under any circumstances, consider any application that is unable to gift their technology for evaluation.

5. Our technology-based solution depends on an ongoing monitoring service. Does the submission condition of "gifted technology" for GSA include such services?

GSA's gifting authority doesn't accept services, so we look at the service as a license. We will work with you and our legal team to address this on a case-by-case basis.

6. Does the HIT Catalyst program buy our technology?

No. The HIT Catalyst program is not a purchaser of technology. Technology purchases must be negotiated directly between the technology supplier and the host site.

7. How are possible test bed locations identified?

GPG identifies federally owned buildings within GSA's portfolio that will be best suited for a pilot evaluation of each technology. We work with the vendor, National Labs and our internal technical committee to come to a consensus on which locations will represent the best testbed opportunity for deployment. Considerations may include state of the incumbent technology, tenant, building size, building location, and other factors relevant to the technology being evaluated.

DOE will facilitate matchmaking between technology providers and interested host sites. DOE may provide assistance through the National Labs in the identification and selection of appropriate host sites. Once the host site and technology provider have negotiated and finalized the details of the demonstration, DOE will support third party M&V.

8. If selected, are applicants required to participate in the program?

No, they are not required to participate.

9. If your proposal is accepted but your technology does not prove out, will the results be released?

GPG and HIT Catalyst publish all findings; to publish only positive findings would compromise the integrity of the programs. An exception to this rule occurs when, because of issues arising during installation and commissioning, the measurement and verification (M&V) process does not deliver definitive or relevant results. In that case, we forego actual findings and instead report best practices and lessons learned.

10. Can you tell us what the end benefit is for a company that is participating in these programs?

The primary benefit, assuming your technology proves out, is market acceptance. Both programs help overcome some of the barriers associated with new, unproven sustainable building technologies by providing detailed, technical reports on their value and functionality, as installed in real, operating conditions.

All GPG results will be made publicly available on the GPG webpage and aim to provide actionable data that can inform public- and private-sector investment decisions for sustainable building technologies. Notable findings from the GPG program may inform decision-making within GSA through the evolution of performance specifications for the GSA portfolio or through indication of technology readiness for incorporation into ESPCs (Energy Savings Performance Contracts).

DOE will publish final technical reports on its forthcoming Technology Demonstration website and develop case studies to share with other building owners through DOE's stakeholder networks, in order to drive national adoption and energy savings. HIT Catalyst market transformation activities include Innovation Challenges, Technology Demonstrations, Procurement Specifications, Application Guidance and Adoption Campaigns. DOE may incorporate the results of successful technology demonstrations into the above listed market transformation activities based on the predefined strategy determined for that technology.

It is important to note that both GPG and HIT Catalyst programs are intended to provide real-world performance data that can accelerate market uptake, but it is not common practice for either program to fund deployment beyond the initial demonstration project. Participation in either program does not guarantee deployment.